

STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-33 were originally filed in this patent application. In response to the first office action dated 7/25/03, an amendment was filed on 10/25/03 that canceled claims 9-10, 12, 25-26, and 29 and amended claims 1, 13, 17, 28 and 30. In response to an office action dated 01/13/04, applicants filed a Request for Reconsideration on 05/12/04, which caused the Examiner to send the pending office action on 08/31/04 with new grounds of rejection. In the pending office action, claims 11 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by European Patent Application EP 0 865 188 A2 to Kraft *et al.* (hereinafter "Kraft"). Claims 1-2, 6, 17-18, 22 and 30-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kraft in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,389,288 to Kuwahara *et al.* (hereinafter "Kuwahara"). Claims 3-5, 7-8, 19-21 and 23-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kraft and Kuwahara and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,479,476 to Finke-Anlauff. Claims 13-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,539,223 to Bijanki *et al.* (hereinafter "Bijanki") in view of Kuwahara. Claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kraft and Kuwahara and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,424,840 to Fitch *et al.* (hereinafter "Fitch"). No claim was allowed. Claims 1-8, 11, 13-24, 27-28, and 30-33 are currently pending.